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KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

JENNINE PERKINSON
Advertising Director

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

OUR VIEW

The more you know

Local school districts deserve credit for taking the initiative and testing preemptively for lead in their water.

In Hermiston and all throughout the InterMountain Education Service District, schools have taken samples and are learning what all comes out of their faucets — whether regularly used for drinking or not — when they turn on the tap.

So far, Hermiston, Helix and Athena-Weston school districts have accrued some helpful knowledge. Helix learned each faucet in their building meets safety standards for levels of lead in drinking water. But Hermiston and Athena-Weston learned there are some spouts in their buildings that are above acceptable limits and require action.

Armed with that knowledge, the districts can upgrade and improve the plumbing and fixtures at those sites, or sign them and close them off to drinking. Both are better options than running unsafe water through our children.

Other districts have submitted samples and are awaiting their results. Blue Mountain Community College is the only local school under the mistaken impression that city testing is good enough. If that was true, all of Hermiston and Athena-Weston's tests would come back with the same lead levels.

That isn't the case, because plenty can happen to water from the time it reaches a property until it fills a drinking glass.

Although budgets are tight for everyone, many businesses and homes and public buildings should consider testing for lead in their water systems. Schools should be required, because of the serious effect lead can have on children's health. Test kits are affordable, easy and accurate. If you have young children glugging water daily from your kitchen sink, it makes sense to know how safe that water is.

Yet a possible drawback to a renewed focus on lead levels in water is the rise of individually packaged, expensive and environmentally destructive bottled water. That is a poor response to high lead levels — or just a fear of high lead levels — at home or work. Test first, make simple easy fixes (like a new faucet) second and if that doesn't work consider bigger fixes such as filtration or using water from a different source. Don't go through carton after carton of wasteful bottled water.

Buy stainless steel or BPA-free reusable plastic bottles, fill them from a safe source and drink for free all day long. And send one to school with your child, too, if it makes you and your pocketbook feel better.

Homes, businesses and public buildings should consider testing for lead in their water systems.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.



OTHER VIEWS

Change in disability benefits a benefit to families and state

The Bend Bulletin

Oregonians with disabilities and their families can start planning for a new financial tool that becomes available this winter, courtesy of the state of Oregon and the federal government.

The state's Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Savings Plan, created after Congress gave states the ability to do so, goes into operation in December. It offers a way for the disabled and their families to put money aside for future needs. It's a good change.

Currently, those with disabilities can have no more than \$2,000 in savings before they begin losing the federal benefits on which many rely. Their families can set up special needs trusts, but those are expensive propositions and require lawyers and trustees. That has put them out of reach for many disabled individuals.

ABLE accounts will change that. They're relatively inexpensive to set up, says Michael Parker of the Oregon 529 Savings Network, of which the ABLE accounts will be a part, and there need be no trustee. The network also includes the state's 529 college savings program.

After-tax dollars can be added by the ABLE account beneficiary or by nondisabled family members, and no taxes will be levied against the accounts. Those who add to the accounts can qualify for tax deductions of up to \$4,000 per year.

The accounts will give disabled beneficiaries more control over their money than many have today. They can be used to pay for a house or a new wheelchair, or nearly anything else that improves a beneficiary's quality of life.

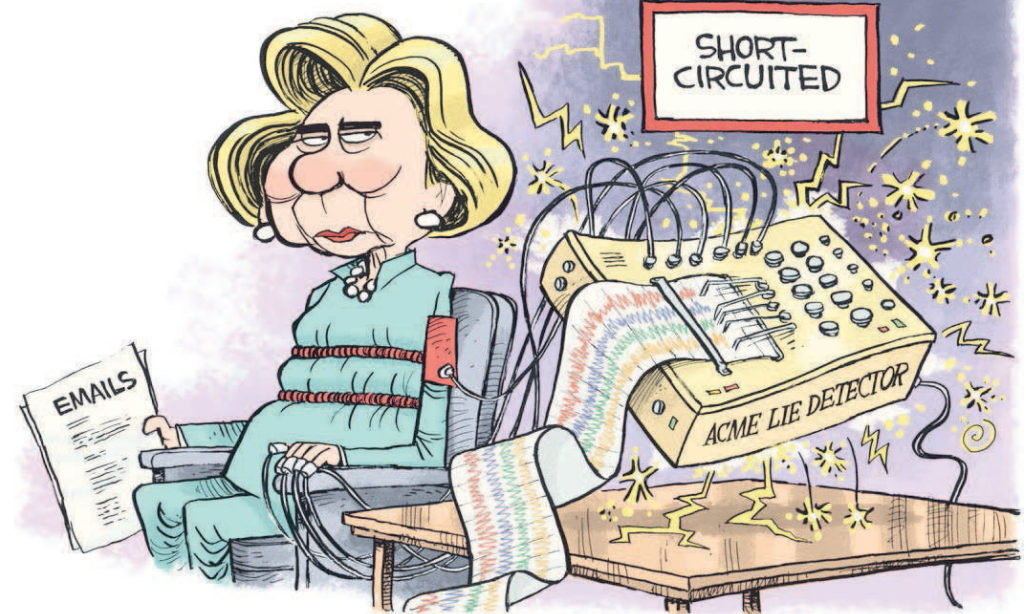
And, an account can contain \$100,000 before there's any loss of federal benefits — a big jump up from the current \$2,000 limit on assets. Even then, a beneficiary would lose benefits only until the ABLE account — which can contain as much as \$310,000 — is spent down to the \$100,000 level. At a beneficiary's death, the account becomes part of his or her estate.

ABLE accounts won't create financial independence for every person with a disability. But they'll provide a bit more peace of mind to families who must worry about continued financial security for disabled relatives after parents or others die.

It offers a way for the disabled and their families to put money aside for future needs.

OTHER VIEWS

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Clinton campaign is boring, but effective

What has Hillary Clinton been doing while Donald Trump has been careening from one controversy to the next? She's been traveling the country giving speeches about jobs, hammering Trump on the economy, and mostly avoiding press contact that could bring attention to her email scandal, the Clinton Foundation, or her record as Secretary of State. And then she talks more about jobs.

Clinton's speeches are boring. They don't make much news. But they're in line with voter concerns three months away from the presidential election.

In her Democratic convention acceptance speech, amid all the promises and proposals, Clinton made her top priority clear. "My primary mission as president will be to create more opportunity and more good jobs with rising wages right here in the United States," she said. Last week, still in convention afterglow, Clinton made a tour out West, giving speeches in Omaha, the Denver suburb of Commerce City, Colorado, and Las Vegas that all focused on meat-and-potatoes economic issues.

The Las Vegas event was in a union building, with a heavily union audience, so there was more emphasis than usual on organized labor. But the heart of the speech was the same as Clinton's other presentations; after all of the pleasantries and stroking that are involved in campaigning, Clinton stuck to a relatively small number of big issues that voters care about most. Step by step, here's the essence of what Clinton did in Vegas:

- 1) Thank local constituents — in this case, IBEW Local 357, the AFL-CIO, and the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 525 "who assisted with parking."
- 2) Thank local officials — Sen. Harry Reid, Rep. Dina Titus and Democratic Senate candidate Catherine Cortez Masto.
- 3) Establish big picture: "We are going to create more good jobs with rising income."
- 4) Promise "investments" focusing on roads, bridges, tunnels, airports, the electric grid, etc. "For every \$1 billion, we get 47,500 jobs, and they are mostly good union jobs with a good middle class income."
- 5) Promise more collective bargaining rights to unions.
- 6) Promise to make college affordable and "debt-free."
- 7) Promise national high-speed broadband Internet.
- 8) Remind people that Trump sells products made overseas.
- 9) Remind that big businessman Trump has sometimes stiffed small businesses working for him.
- 10) Praise a local small business (an IBEW shop, of course).
- 11) Pledge more technical education. "We need to invest in our young people and give them different paths besides four-year college to get ahead in America."
- 12) Promise free community college.
- 13) Remind again that Trump has mistreated small businesspeople.
- 14) Mention that her father was a small businessman.
- 15) Use example of Trump's Florida resort to imply (without actually saying) that she'll bring in fewer foreign workers to take American jobs.
- 16) Turn a Trump trademark against him.



BYRON YORK
Comment

"You've got to ask yourself in this campaign, do you want a president who stands for 'you're fired' or one who stands for 'you're hired?'"

17) Mention Trump University.
18) Repeat Trump is unqualified and unfit to be president.

19) Mention one more time her plans for jobs, education, healthcare and more.

20) Sum up: "I think this election comes down to economic opportunity, national security, and American unity."

There wasn't a single headline in the entire 20-minute poll- and focus group-tested speech, or the others delivered in Nebraska and Colorado, which hit many of the same points. And by the way, Clinton's speeches are about one-third the length of Trump's unscripted performances, which often go over an hour, giving Trump far more chances to say something controversial.

Trump has often mocked the kind of speech Clinton gives. At a huge rally in Dallas last fall, Trump pledged never to give a canned presentation. "That would be so much easier," he said. "We read a speech for 45 minutes. Everybody falls asleep, listening to the same old stuff..."

Trump doesn't do that. His speeches are long, stream-of-consciousness affairs, with the potential to erupt into news at any moment. From Trump's perspective, Clinton's are the worst type of boring.

But boring can work. Look at Clinton's summation. Her presentation is entirely consistent with the issues that voters say are the most important in this election. Asked in the most recent Fox News polls which is the most important issue facing the country, voters most named the economy and national security. (The two topics were tied with 22 percent each.) When Clinton says, "I think this election comes down to economic opportunity, national security and American unity," she's not speaking off the cuff.

None of this means that Clinton, as president, might actually accomplish what she promises. For example, Clinton made big promises on jobs in her 2000 campaign for a Senate seat from New York, the *Washington Post* reported Sunday, and those promises came to nothing. Now, she's saying similar things again. It worked in New York in 2000 and 2006. Research and instinct indicate it's still what voters want to hear.

And she'll keep saying it. He might mock her, he might criticize her, he might give her new nicknames, but one thing Trump can count on is that Clinton will pursue her campaign relentlessly. She will never give up.

Think back to 2008, in her epic battle with then-Sen. Barack Obama for the Democratic nomination. Clinton wasn't very good at campaigning. But her effort had a plodding, one-foot-in-front-of-the-other quality to it that suggested while Clinton could never be a spectacular candidate like her opponent Obama, she nevertheless would keep moving forward until she achieved her goal.

One can go a long way in life by putting one foot in front of the other. In '08, Clinton ran into an overwhelming force in Obama. Now, things appear to be lining up her way. She'll do boring to win, any day.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.

YOUR VIEWS

Newspaper shouldn't consider fault, just ways to help

The quality of a newspaper is judged by every person who reads that paper, and I am glad the *East Oregonian* receives awards. I don't think the front page story of Aug. 6's paper (*Permanent scars, IA*) is worthy of front page coverage or a headline.

The couple in question have indeed been affected by the wreck they were involved in, and I wish them the best in the future. Wouldn't a more appropriate point of view be a story about the limits of insurance coverage when a driver is driving in a manner that caused the wreck and resulted in a citation?

The article approached the story from the "poor investigation" point of view and implied the sheriff's office was at fault.

First responders to injury accidents have decisions to make in order to save lives, and second guessing their decisions a year after the fact seems negative and distracting.

If the purpose of the article is to build support for the injured victim, it did a good job, and I can only hope some good comes out of people knowing her situation. Perhaps some energy could be spent trying to build a support system for the young couple that would help with the medical bills.

It seems as though the paper could have an expectation of public interest if the story offered a variable to the theme of blame someone.

No, let's find a way to help these folks and stop pointing fingers.

Colleen Blackwood Pendleton

LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.